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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

24 May 1963

SUBJECT: CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACKING INDIA  
THROUGH BURMESE TERRITORY

THE PROBLEM

To assess the maximum offensive capabilities of Communist China's military forces against India in an attack through Burma. No estimate is to be made of Chinese intentions.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The government of Burma would not resist the movement of Chinese forces across Burmese territory and would acquiesce in the utilization by the Chinese of Burmese transportation facilities and airfields along the routes of advance.
2. The Burmese would not actively support the Chinese.
3. The Chinese would not divert any forces for security in Burma.

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GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic  
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4. The Chinese would not augment ground and air forces along China's borders with countries in southeast Asia.

5. The Chinese would use port and rail facilities in North Vietnam.

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### CONCLUSIONS

A. In an attack on India through Burma we believe that the Chinese Communists would use Kunming as their base of supply. Kunming is served by a rail line from Hanoi in North Vietnam and by road from the Chinese railhead at Anshun, and these facilities could support limited operations in the China-Burma-India theater. The Chinese could use two principal routes to move supplies through Burma: (a) the Ledo Road via Myitkyina and (b) the Lashio-Mandalay-Imphal road. (Paras. 1-2)

B. After essential road improvements the Chinese could move a total of 500 tons per day to support ground operations in India. We estimate that the maximum ground force the Chinese could deploy in an attack into India through Burma would be about 68,000 men, composed of approximately five infantry divisions under the command of an army headquarters. The most favorable period for operations in the area occurs after the beginning of the dry season in November. (Paras. 3-9)

C. We estimate the force advancing over the Ledo Road would consist of one light infantry division, and one standard infantry

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division. The attack, we believe, would have the objective of destroying Indian forces, the seizure of the Digboi oil fields and the eventual link-up with Chinese forces advancing from Tibet into the eastern part of the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA). We estimate the force advancing through Imphal would consist of the major elements of two light infantry divisions and one standard infantry division. This attack, we believe, would have the objective of destroying Indian forces and, together with the attacks from Tibet, the occupation of important areas of northeast India. (Paras. 13-14)

D. We believe the Chinese would employ about 395 combat aircraft in operations against northeast India. This force would probably consist of 300 MIG-15/17 jet fighters, 75 IL-28 light jet bombers, and 20 TU-2 light piston bombers. We estimate that these aircraft would provide a daily sortie rate of about 360. Approximately 120 transport aircraft would be available to support operations from Burma. (Paras. 12-16)

E. We believe that the Chinese have the purely military resources -- personnel, equipment, weapons, and ammunition -- to conduct operations through Burma and simultaneously attack along the Himalayan front. If such operations were undertaken, logistic

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support would require approximately 25 percent (50,000) of the nation's truck park and, on an annual basis, more than 50 percent (750,000 tons) of the motor gasoline available in all of China in 1962. It would necessitate a drastic reallocation of the nation's transportation and POL resources, and the Chinese would be confronted with extremely formidable maintenance and replacement problems.

F. We believe that the Chinese could launch attacks from Tibet and Sinkiang with little or no warning. We believe the attack through Burma, on the other hand, would give Indian defenses weeks of warning. Even if the Chinese could do the road rebuilding surreptitiously or under the guise of some peaceful purpose, the attacking columns would require three or four weeks to close in their attack positions at the Indo-Burma border, and probably would be quickly detected. (Para. 20)

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## DISCUSSION

### I. GROUND OPERATIONS

#### Logistics

1. The theater of operations for a Chinese Communist offensive against India through Burma encompasses Yunnan Province in China, northern Burma, and the states of Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur in northeast India. The Chinese would probably locate their base depot at Kunming which is served by road from the railhead at Anshun and by rail via Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam.

2. Supplies for Chinese ground forces engaged in operations in India would have to be moved over distances ranging from 800 to 1,700 miles from Kunming. The initial transportation leg would cover the route by rail between Kunming and Ipinglang, and then by road to Hsinchieh, which is near the Sino-Burmese border some 330 miles west of Kunming. From Hsinchieh the Chinese could move supplies across Burma to the Indo-Burmese border via the following main supply routes: (a) over the Ledo Road via Myitkyina, and (b) over the Burma Road to Mandalay and thence by way of the

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Mandalay-Imphal road. Some supplies could also be delivered to Mandalay via the route through Talo and Keng Tung. Available intelligence indicates that extensive repairs to the Shingbuiyang-Pangsau Pass section of the Ledo Road and some engineering work on the northern portion of the Mandalay-Imphal road would be required before these logistic routes could support the scale of military operations envisaged.

3. The limiting factor governing Chinese attacks on India from Burma would be the amount of supplies which could be moved from Kunming through Burma. We estimate that the Chinese could move a maximum of about 1,100 tons forward from Kunming. This tonnage, we believe, would be used as follows: 60 tons for engineer units, 340 tons for motor transport, 500 tons to support ground operations in India, and 200 tons for air units in Burma.

#### Composition of the Attacking Forces

4. We estimate that the composition of the Chinese Communist force could include an army headquarters to provide operational control along the axes of advance, lightly equipped infantry divisions for the initial phase across the mountainous jungle terrain along the Indo-Burmese border, and an operational reserve consisting

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of standard infantry divisions, with their organic medium artillery and tanks, to be employed on the Assam plain.

5. These ground units could be provided from the two armies located in the Kunming Military Region, or, if necessary, could be deployed from China's strategic ground reserve. In any case, sufficient numbers of trained and equipped infantry divisions are readily available from China's standing army.

#### Operational Considerations

6. These troops probably would be staged in Chinese territory near the Sino-Burmese border. Forward movement from the staging areas would have to await necessary road repairs. We believe that essential improvement of the Ledo Road would require the employment of six engineer regiments and take up to several months. Two engineer regiments would probably be sufficient to make the necessary improvements to and maintain the Mandalay-Imphal Road. After essential road repair, it is estimated that the attack forces could close in their attack positions at the Indo-Burma border in three to four weeks.

7. An offensive during the southwest monsoon (May-September) would be extremely difficult, but not impossible, to support logistically. The most favorable period for military operations in the

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area occurs after the beginning of the dry season in November. Refer to Annex D for a detailed discussion of the climatic effects on ground and air operations.

#### Avenues of Attack

8. We estimate that the Chinese would utilize two major avenues of advance into northeast India. One leads from Pangsau Pass through Ledo and across the Digboi oil fields to Dibrugarh; the other via Imphal and Kohima, and Gauhati.

9. In simultaneous advances over the two principal avenues of attack into India, the Chinese could employ and logistically support a force estimated at 68,000 troops, organized into approximately five infantry divisions under the command of an army headquarters.\* Tables of personnel and equipment for the army headquarters and for the standard infantry division are shown in Annexes B and C, respectively.

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\* The daily through-put capacities of the Ledo Road and the Mandalay-Imphal route required to support this force are 230 tons and 270 tons, respectively. If the Chinese had as much as six months to restore these logistic routes to near their estimated maximum capacities (600 tons for the Ledo Road and 450 tons for the Mandalay-Imphal Road), additional tonnages delivered over the Kunming-Talo-Mandalay Road could permit them to employ up to two additional light infantry divisions.

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10. Along the northern axis leading to Dibrugarh the Chinese force could consist of one light infantry division and one standard infantry division (30,500 troops). Chinese objectives in this attack, we believe, would be the destruction of Indian Army forces, the seizure of the Digboi oil fields, and the eventual link-up with Chinese operations from Tibet into the eastern part of the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA).\*

11. In the advance towards Western Assam the Chinese could employ the major elements of two light infantry divisions and one standard infantry division (37,500 troops). This attack and the attacks from Tibet would probably have the objective of destroying Indian forces and the occupation of northeast India.

## II. AIR OPERATIONS

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12. In the "██████ Estimate of the Communist Chinese Air Threat Against India," dated 17 January 1963, 290 tactical aircraft were estimated as constituting the air threat. Of this number, we believe 100 aircraft would be based in Sinkiang for operations against the Ladakh-Jammu-Kashmir area, and 190 would be based in

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\* USIB Memorandum, "Chinese Communist Ground Threat Against India from Tibet and Sinkiang," dated 17 April 1963.

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Tibet and southwest China for operations against northeast India. In support of operations through Burma we believe an additional 205 tactical aircraft could be employed against northeastern India. The 395 aircraft which could operate against India's eastern front would probably consist of 300 MIG-15/17s (including 40 MIG-17D all-weather aircraft), 75 IL-28s, and 20 TU-2s. Locations of all aircraft are identified in Annexes E and F, and logistic requirements for this force are noted at Annex G.

13. There are 19 airfields within China and 12 within northern Burma which could be used for the employment of Chinese Communist air forces in support of attacks against northeast India. Because of operational and logistic factors we believe only six of the former and two of the latter would be used for combat support of these attacks. We believe the logistic capabilities are sufficient to support two fighter regiments at Myitkyina South and one fighter regiment at Namponmao. A program of improving existing forward airfields in Burma and the use of airfields that may be captured in India would permit continuing forward deployment of fighter/ground attack aircraft to the immediate vicinity of the active battle area.

14. Jets based at Myitkyina South and Namponmao would be the only fighters that could be employed in a ground attack role. From

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these two bases in Burma, the fighters could provide close support to ground forces generally within an area embracing Imphal, Dibrugarh, and Sadiya in India (see map, Annex ). The TU-2 aircraft, in attacks from Nagchhu Dzong airfield in Tibet, could also provide support to ground forces as far south as Imphal. The IL-28s would have the range to conduct bombing attacks and reconnaissance over northeast India and jet fighters on combat air patrol could cover all of India east of East Pakistan and Nepal.

15. It is estimated that these Chinese Communist aircraft would provide a daily sortie rate of about <sup>300.</sup> / A likely mixture for this number of sorties would be 65 ground support and 225 air defense/combat air patrol sorties by jet fighters, with the jet light bombers conducting 55 sorties per day, and the piston light bombers conducting 15 sorties per day.

16. We believe that approximately 120 light and small transport aircraft could be utilized in supporting operations through Burma. The 30 IL-12s, 16 IL-14s, and 28 C-46s of the Thirteenth Air Division could deliver about 132 tons of material daily from the Chengtu area to the airfields at Myitkyina South and Namponmao as long as airborne operations were not conducted elsewhere. In addition, 7 IL-2s and 3 C-47s of the Thirteenth Air Division could

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operate from Kunming or Mandalay and 35 AN-2s could be located in Burma as follows: 10 at Sinkaling Hkani South, 10 at Kolemia, and 15 at Katha. The AN-2s would have the primary mission of supporting the ground forces.

III. THE EFFECT OF BURMA OPERATIONS ON CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY CAPABILITIES FROM TIBET AND SINKIANG

17. In USIB Memorandum, "Chinese Communist Ground Threat Against India from Tibet and Sinkiang," dated 17 April 1963, we estimated that to sustain the operations described in that study for one year would require about 40,000 trucks, and approximately 600,000 tons of motor gasoline. We then made the following judgment: "An effort of this size probably could not be supported if China were involved in significant military activity elsewhere."

18. We believe that the Chinese have the purely military resources -- personnel, equipment, weapons, and ammunition -- to conduct operations through Burma and simultaneously attack along the Himalayan front. However, the attack through Burma would require approximately 10,000 trucks and, on an annual basis, nearly 150,000 tons of motor gasoline. Thus, if the Chinese were to launch attacks simultaneously into India from Tibet, Sinkiang

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and Burma, approximately 25 percent (50,000) of the nation's truck park would have to be used, and, on an annual basis, more than 50 percent (750,000 tons) of the motor gasoline available in all of China in 1962 would be consumed.

19. Although the Chinese could, if they wished, make available the motor transport and gasoline required to support these offensives, to do so would necessitate a drastic reallocation of the nation's transportation and POL resources. Motor and air transport would have to be redistributed from other military regions and the civilian economy would be stripped of all but a minimal level of these modes of transportation. Many organizational and managerial problems would arise, and it is questionable whether the military or civilian transportation agencies could cope with these problems. Furthermore, if this transportation effort, which would be taking place over extremely long and difficult roads and in areas far remote from industrial bases, were to continue for long, the Chinese would be confronted by extremely formidable maintenance and replacement problems.

20. We believe that the Chinese could launch attacks from Tibet and Sinkiang with little or no warning. We believe the attack through Burma, on the other hand, would give Indian

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defenses weeks of warning. Even if the Chinese could rebuild the roads surreptitiously or under the guise of some peaceful purpose, the attacking columns would require three or four weeks to close in their attack positions on the Indo-Burma border and would probably be detected early.

NOTE: The Annexes are not included in this draft.

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